

# ADE DAILY NEWS CLIPS

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## **Partnership grows between Walton Family Foundation, Arkansas Tech University (Russellville Courier)**

What began six years ago with a grant to fund a continuing education opportunity for school district superintendents in Arkansas has grown to become a dynamic partnership between the Walton Family Foundation and Arkansas Tech University that is changing K-12 education in the state.

The program founded by the initial grant in 2007 has developed into the Arkansas Center for Executive Leadership Leader to Leader (L2L) program, which now offers both superintendents and principals from school districts around Arkansas an opportunity to participate in a nine-month program.

L2L is operated by the Arkansas Tech Center for Leadership and Learning with oversight from Dr. Mary Gunter, dean of the Arkansas Tech Graduate College.

Through participation in L2L, superintendents and principals learn new solutions to old problems and gain the opportunity to share ideas that have worked within their districts.

Earlier this week, the Walton Family Foundation announced a \$450,000 grant to ATU that will allow for the continuation of the L2L program for superintendents and principals.

“The economic well-being of our state depends upon the ability to create an environment where every child in Arkansas has access to a high-quality, publicly funded education,” said Kathy Smith, senior program officer for the Walton Family Foundation’s Arkansas Education Reform initiative, in the news release announcing the \$450,000 grant.

“We believe in preparing students for success with a quality education. When you do, academic expectations grow, graduation rates rise and the standard of living improves. Arkansas has made significant gains in education and we will continue to invest in programs that help raise the academic bar.”

In addition to L2L, the Walton Family Foundation also supports the Arkansas Tech Center for Leadership and Learning through the newly-created LEAD 21 program.

LEAD 21, which is made possible through a \$974,157 grant from the Walton Family Foundation, will make the Arkansas Tech Master of Education degree in educational leadership available to selected teachers in Pulaski County and the Delta region of Arkansas through a blended format of online course offerings and seminars.



“This program is designed to make the Master of Education degree in educational leadership from Arkansas Tech accessible to teachers from around the state who might not have previously had the ability to pursue it,” Gunter said. “LEAD 21 will identify potential leaders in difficult to serve areas. Participants will commit to a rigorous two-year graduate program, and they will also make a commitment to remain as educators in Arkansas for two years after their graduation.”

LEAD 21 will serve two cohorts of 20 Master of Education in educational leadership students each during the next four years. The first cohort began its studies earlier this month. The second cohort will begin the program in summer 2014. Students in the program are designated as Walton Leader Scholars.

Dr. Matt McClure, superintendent of the Cross County School District, will serve as coordinator and facilitator for the LEAD 21 program.

Teachers interested in participating in the LEAD 21 program must meet the geographic requirements of the program, submit an application, take part in a writing assessment and be interviewed by representatives from the Arkansas Tech Center for Leadership and Learning.

“LEAD 21 will create a cadre of leaders that will help schools develop leadership capacity within their districts as positions become available,” said Gunter.

“Our goal is to measure the impact of the program in both student achievement and building success.” Gunter said that in addition to covering the costs of tuition for LEAD 21 cohort participants, the funding from the Walton Family Foundation will also allow the Arkansas Tech Center for Leadership and Learning to employ a faculty member that will teach the Walton Leader Scholars and serve as their advisor.

Dr. Lonnie Melvin, visiting assistant professor of educational leadership in the Arkansas Tech Center for Leadership and Learning, will serve as both instructor and advisor for the Walton Leader Scholars.

Visit [www.waltonfamilyfoundation.org](http://www.waltonfamilyfoundation.org) to learn more about the Walton Family Foundation.

Visit [www.atu.edu/cll](http://www.atu.edu/cll) to learn more about the Arkansas Tech Center for Leadership and Learning.

#### Inaugural Walton Leader Scholars

The inaugural class of Walton Leader Scholars (listed with the educational entity at which they serve) includes:

- Mary Beth Cox, North Little Rock High School
- Jonathan Crossley, Palestine-Wheatley High School
- Amanda Crowder, Lighthouse Academies of Arkansas, Jacksonville
- Tolu Daramola, KIPP Delta Public Schools, Helena



- Tamara Davis, Maumelle High School
- Suzette Decesaro, Adkins Pre-K, Pulaski County Special School District
- Pamela Freeman, Dupree Elementary, Pulaski County Special School District
- Chip Greenwell, El Dorado New Tech High School
- Catherine Hayes, North Little Rock High School
- Caroline Lampinen, Dumas School District
- Jaclyn Markovich, Lee County High School
- Hannah McColleston, Teach For America, Arkansas region
- Valencia Rochelle, Taylor Elementary, Pulaski County Special School District
- Kara Smith, Helena Elementary School
- Courtney Stone, Lighthouse Academies of Arkansas, Jacksonville
- Kimberly Weaver, Cross County High School
- Ethan Weeks, Cross County High School
- Emily Wells, Camden Fairview High School
- Norman Whitfield, Lighthouse Academies of Arkansas, Jacksonville
- Katelyn Wilhelmi, Helena Middle School

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### **Camp iRock: Promoting healthy lifestyles, physical activity and self-confidence (Pine Bluff Commercial)**

Forty young ladies from throughout the state of Arkansas converged on the campus of the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff last week for the Arkansas Minority Health Commission's third annual Camp iRock, an all-girls fitness and nutrition camp.

This free residential camp, designed exclusively for girls in sixth, seventh and eighth grade, offered educational activities, workshops and exercises aimed at promoting physical activity, healthy lifestyles and self-confidence.

Camp iRock continues to explore new territories with this marking its first year at UAPB.



“Because there are definite correlations between obesity and academic performance, we chose to hold this year’s camp at UAPB and expose our campers to the college experience,” said Chantel Tucker, health initiative project manager with the AMHC.

The week included structured physical activity where the girls learned the fundamentals of sports including, basketball, volleyball and soccer. The girls were also given an option during each day to select an activity of their choice, such as water aerobics, line dancing, Zumba for Kicks/Hip-Hop.

The girls were provided a tour of the UAPB campus on Friday. For the third consecutive year, first lady of Arkansas, Ginger Beebe, participated in the closing ceremony held Saturday in the Student Union Ballroom at UAPB.

According to the Arkansas Center for Health Improvement, one in three Arkansas public school students are overweight or at risk for becoming overweight. These children have a higher risk of developing diabetes orthopedic problems, sleep disturbances and kidney problems. In addition, behavioral and psychological problems have been related to childhood obesity, and obese students are twice as likely to be in special education as non-obese students.

“The Arkansas Minority Health Commission is proud of the success of the last two year’s camps and our campers, and we hope to generate that same positivity and impact in 2013,” said Dr. Idonia Trotter, executive director of the AMHC. “Providing this experience to girls in minority communities is an important part of making an impact on the health disparities that the AMHC was created to address.”

Camp iRock 2013 is made possible through the collaborative efforts of the AMHC, UAPB, Cossatot Community College University of Arkansas and Girl Scout-Diamonds of Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas.

The 40 participants, 10 from each of Arkansas’s four Congressional Districts, had to meet certain criteria in order to attend the camp. The criteria included:

Must be entering the sixth-eighth grade during the 2013-2014 school year

Must be a resident of the state of Arkansas

Must be a minority and/or live in an underserved community

BMI must be at least in the 85th percentile

Physical examination including BMI from physician

Parent/Guardian must sign release for photographs

Consent form signed by parent/guardian

Campers must participate in all camp activities



## About Arkansas Minority Health Commission

The mission of The Arkansas Minority Health Commission is to ensure all minority Arkansans access to health care that is equal to the care provided to other citizens of the state and to seek ways to provide education, address issues and prevent diseases and conditions that are prevalent among minority populations. To learn more about the Arkansas Minority Health Commission visit [arminorityhealth.com](http://arminorityhealth.com). To get more details about Camp iRock visit [campirock.com](http://campirock.com).

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## Education notebook (Arkansas Democrat-Gazette)

### LR Catholic High gets new windows

The windows are new, double-paned and tinted, but they still open to the outside, meaning that Little Rock Catholic High School classrooms will never be a constant, sterile 72 degrees, Principal Steve Straessle said last week.

The principal said the 700 students at the all-boys school need fresh air.

And while the renovations that are under way at the 63-year-old school on Father Tribou Drive will eventually include the addition of classroom air conditioning, Straessle said he anticipates turning it on only rarely. A couple of weeks in August and a couple of weeks in May, he said, and when pollen threatens to gum up the growing number of computers and electronic white boards on the campus.

Representatives of the school have raised about half of the \$15 million they need to pay for three years of renovations. They continue to appeal to the school's alumni, alumni families and friends of the school for contributions.

This summer, the renovation work includes replacing all windows on the main building and tearing out the plaster and tile ceilings in the classroom hallways.

The new glass is replacing the light-blue panels that checkered the school's orange-brick exterior for decades. The hallway ceilings will remain exposed this school year in anticipation of the renovation and rewiring of classrooms over the next year.

In coming weeks, a track will also be paved around the recently completed football field.

### Judge lets widow

continue lawsuit

A federal judge last week approved a motion by the widow of a former Pulaski County Special School District superintendent to become the substitute plaintiff in her late husband's lawsuit against the school district.



At issue is whether the district was obligated to fulfill a buyout provision in Charles Hopson's superintendent contract when Hopson was removed by the state Department of Education from his job in June 2011 as part of a state takeover of the fiscally distressed district.

Hopson sued but died in October 2011.

U.S. District Judge D. Price Marshall Jr. agreed that Patricia Hopson could stand in for her husband despite being 77 days late in requesting the substitution.

"There is no suggestion that Mrs. Hopson was acting in other than good faith," Marshall wrote and added that denying her motion and leaving the contract matter for a state court to decide would neither serve the clients nor judicial economy well.

The judge also noted that both the district and Patricia Hopson are open to settlement talks and, to that end, he requested that U.S. Magistrate Joe. J. Volpe hold a settlement conference.

NLR debates plan to outsource fill-ins

Under consideration in the North Little Rock School District is a plan to outsource the hiring and general management of the substitute teachers used in district schools.

The district spent \$743,467 for substitutes this past year for 11,435 days of employee absences.

District leaders say they were prompted to research hiring a firm to provide substitute-teacher services by changes in the federal healthcare law.

The changes in the law may require school districts to provide health insurance to any employee who averages a 30-hour work week over nine months. That has the potential to cost the district as much as \$115,416 a year, said Gregg Thompson, district director of human resources.

A substitute-service provider would not be subject to the nine-month restriction but could average the working hours over 12 months, meaning that the substitute teachers would average less than 30-hour work weeks - even if they worked in schools daily.

The district could save as much as \$77,679, Thompson said, by contracting with a substitute-teacher service. Another benefit of a substitute-service provider would be a better-trained substitute-teacher force, he said.

2 graduates receive National Merit cash

Michael G. Culjak Jr. of Sherwood, a new graduate of Little Rock Catholic High, and Patrick C. Kellycooper of Sherwood, a new graduate of Little Rock Central High, are the latest Arkansas students to be named recipients of National Merit Scholarships.

Culjak is receiving a corporate-sponsored award supported by PPG Industries Foundation.



Kellycooper also is receiving a corporate-sponsored scholarship financed by General Dynamics.

The National Merit Corp. periodically releases the names of annual scholarship winners.